

What's this Christianity all about?

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Scripture quotations in this booklet are from the World English Bible British version (WEB).

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What's this Christianity all about?

Well, here is a brief introduction as to how you become a Christian, experience his forgiveness and unconditional love and grow in the amazing life God has for you.

1. Salvation.

God is one and yet there are three parts to God: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. Just like God (John 4:24), we are spirit beings, we live in a physical body and we have a soul (our mind, will and emotions):

“May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”. (1 Thess. 5:23)

God created us all to have fellowship with Him (Gen. 3:8; 1 Cor. 1:9) and to walk in the wonderful life He has for us (John 10:10). However, sin in our lives causes us to die spiritually and separates us from God (1 John 1:6-7; 2 Cor. 6:14-15):

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”. (Rom. 6:23 WEB; see also Eph. 2:1)

If our physical bodies were to die while we were separated from God then our eternal destiny would be hell (Mark 16:16; John 3:36). This is not God's desire for anyone. His desire is for everyone to enjoy everlasting or eternal life, in fellowship with him both now on earth and in heaven following the death of our physical bodies (John 3:16).

To deal with the effects of sin in our lives God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on a cross as a sacrifice for our sins:

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures”. (1 Cor. 15:3)

His blood was shed, washing us or cleansing us from all our sins (1 John 1:7), so we could receive God’s forgiveness (Eph. 1:7). This opened the way for us to be born again or saved.

Jesus, in His ministry on the earth, met with a Pharisee called Nicodemus (John 3:1-7). He told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again spiritually (saved) in order to have fellowship with God.

How do we do this? We must ask God’s forgiveness and repent or commit to change our sinful ways with God’s help (Acts 3:19). We need to believe that Jesus died for us and rose again. Then we ask Jesus to be Lord of our lives, that is to come into our lives and take control:

“That if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes resulting in righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made resulting in salvation.” (Rom. 10:9-10)

When we do this our spirit is made new (Ezek. 11:19), reborn or saved. At salvation we become Christians and our fellowship with God is restored. Jesus comes to live in us in the form of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9-10). We become God’s children (John 1:12-13).

The only way to restored fellowship with God is through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). We can’t earn salvation or attain it by our own efforts, it is a free gift of God’s grace that we receive by faith:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast”. (Eph. 2:8)

The devil is real and only has plans to harm and defeat us (John 10:10) but by His death and resurrection Jesus defeated satan and stripped him of all power and authority (Col. 2:15). As born-again Christians we share in that victory (1 Cor. 15:57). God has only good for us, peace (John 14:27), love (Rom. 5:5), joy (Neh. 8:10), prosperity (Phil. 4:19), healing (1 Peter 2:24) and protection (Ps. 91). All of our sins are forgiven (Eph. 1:7), we are redeemed (Col. 1:14) and made righteous or given right standing with God (2 Cor. 5:21). Redeemed means to be set free by the paying of a price. Jesus paid the price with the sacrifice of his body and thus redeemed or freed us from all the effects of sin in our lives and all the destructive plans of satan.

2. What Next?

a) Water Baptism

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. (Matt. 28:19)

God commanded us to baptize those who are born again and become disciples of Jesus. Jesus was baptized as He started His ministry on earth. Baptism is complete immersion in water. There are many examples of new Christians being baptized in the early church (Acts 8:26-39; Acts 16:30-33).

Water baptism is a powerful public declaration of our salvation, it is an outward sign of an inward change. As we are immersed into the water and then arise out of the water we identify with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5).

b) Baptism in the Holy Spirit

When we were born again, we received the Holy Spirit to live in us (2 Cor. 1:22). We can also receive an infilling or empowering of the Holy Spirit and this we call the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The disciples of Jesus experienced this after Jesus had ascended into heaven. The Holy Spirit came on each one of them as tongues of fire:

“Now when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all with one accord in one place. Suddenly there came from the sky a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. Tongues like fire appeared and were distributed to them, and one sat on each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them the ability to speak”. (Acts 2:1-4)

This infilling empowers us to share Jesus with others (Acts 1:8). The power of the Holy Spirit also enables us to grow as Christians to be more and more like Jesus ((2 Cor. 3:18) and to experience all God has for us (2 Peter 1:3-4). As we read and study God’s word, the Bible, the Holy Spirit will reveal that word to us, bringing understanding (John 14:26).

How do we receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit? We just need to ask in faith (Luke 11:13). Ask and you will receive! When you are baptized in the Holy Spirit you may or may not experience anything with your senses, as the disciples did, but you will receive the gift of tongues. This is sometimes called: “praying in the Spirit”. It is praying in a language that we don’t understand but God does. God knows all things and therefore when we allow the Holy Spirit to pray through us, we pray perfect prayers. Although this is Holy Spirit driven prayer, we are still in control; we can pray in our native tongue and we can switch to praying in tongues as we wish (1 Cor 14:14-15).

c) Growing as a Christian

Christianity is a wonderful journey, discovering all God has for us, growing to be more like Him and allowing His love to flow through us to a broken world. The answers to our quest are found in the Bible. We need to study it and ask the Holy Spirit to bring us understanding. Start in the New Testament, in the gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

We can bring our needs, questions and desires to God, just as we would to our earthly parents. We do this by praying. Praying is really just talking to God.

“This is the boldness which we have towards him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he listens to us. And if we know that he listens to us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him”. (1 John 5:14-15)

We can find God’s will in the Bible, for example **Phil. 4:19**:

“My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

How do we pray? We pray to God the Father in Jesus name (John 16:23). Jesus gave us a model prayer:

“Pray like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen’”. (Matt. 6:9-13)

We can base our prayers on this prayer. In the model prayer Jesus gave us he directed us to praise God and ask Him for His will to be done. We can ask for our needs to be met and that He would forgive us and

help us to forgive others. We can also ask God to help us do good and not evil and protect us from all the bad things satan would like to bring us.

When we pray for things from God, we need to ask in faith (Mark 11:24), or believe God will answer our prayers. God has given all of us faith (Rom 12:3) but we need to grow it! We do this by studying God's word (Rom 10:17). For example, if you are believing God for healing then search the Bible for verses on healing. This will build up your faith to be healed.

Finally, as new Christians it is important to be part of a Bible believing and teaching church. There you can get good teaching to help you understand the Bible and get encouragement and answers to your questions.

God bless you, enjoy this amazing, life changing journey!